

Is the technology
contributing to the
flattening of the
world?



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Regardless if the world is flat or if it is not, we still have an unprecedented situation to deal with. The world's economy is being enlarged, or as Thomas Friedman explains, becoming tinier. At this very moment, a fifteen-year-old child in Spain can look at the exact same content as a college professor at Harvard. With this occurring all around the world with even more extreme examples, the question arises, is this good for our world, or can it be devastating? Thomas Friedman argues it is unbelievable for the world and going to send us to reaches we never thought we could attain, however others argue that this flattening has horrific affects as others argue that this flattening does not even exist.

Any individual in the world can access virtually anything. This is causing a revolution of technology, knowledge, relationships, and things never thought possible. Not only does this flattening affect our economy but every single aspect of our lives. In the article *Why the World is Flat* by Daniel H. Pink, Pink sits down with Friedman and interviews him on his theory of the flat world. Pink asks Friedman about his book as he explains that China and India are parts of the world that are going to greatly influenced by flattening.

Friedman replies with an astonishing example: " Bill Gates has a nice line: He says, 20 years ago, would you rather have been a B-student in Poughkeepsie or a genius in Shanghai? Twenty years ago you'd rather be a B-student in Poughkeepsie. Today? " This exemplifies the key aspect of how the flat world can change lives. The answer is the boy from Shanghai. In the past, only the countries that were atop the wealthiest had abilities to create futures for students and give them proper schooling. However now, anyone with a ten-year-old computer or a phone can access any piece of knowledge on the

Internet. Friedman also mentions more support in Pinks article. After Friedman explains how he first got the idea why the world is flat he says, "Several technological and political forces have converged, and that has produced a global, Web-enabled playing field that allows for multiple forms of collaboration without regard to geography or distance - or soon, even language." This promotes the stance of why a flat world can give anyone anything. However, anyone can talk about this subject, but can anyone back it up with statistics to prove it?

With all the talk from Thomas Friedman, it is easy to get caught up in the movement of the flattening world. However, is the world as interconnected as Friedman believes it to be? Dr. Pankaj Ghemawat, a professor at IESE in Barcelona, explains that using statistics, we really are not that interconnected at all. We discussed in class that Ghemawat says that only two percent of calls around the world are International, six percent including skype and web chats. This supports the idea that our world is not flat, in fact far from it. If the world is so flat why are only six percent of the calls around the world are international? Also, Ghemawat brings up the idea that maybe immigration could show us how the world is beginning to be flattened. He poses the question, how many first generation immigrants currently are in different countries around the world. The answer is three percent. This is a harsh blow to Friedman's theory because if it were correct, the "No-boarder effect" would mean there are upwards to one hundred percent immigration. Lastly, Ghemawat uses a term, Globaloney, saying that Friedman is in fact exaggerating the conception of how technology is going to over power all cultural, political, and geographical barriers. Friedman believes that maybe

with in the next ten years, technology will be the cause for the flat world. Although it may seem very likely, until the teleporter is invented, geographical barriers will always exist. Cultural and language barriers as well are very hard to overcome although they have a more likely chance of being accomplished.

In contrast to why the world is not flat, Ghemawat had only looked at the exact numbers currently standing, however he had not looked into the past. However, if you look into the past, you may be a little convinced the world is actually flattening. Each of the statistics that Ghemawat found: International calls and immigration as well as technology. These all have increased insanely in the past twenty years and are expected to skyrocket in the future. Although the future is always unknown, Ghemawat may want to prepare for Friedman's theory, because I think I can feel the world flattening.